

4. AESTHETICS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR describes existing aesthetic resources in the area of the proposed project and the broader region, and evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the project. CEQA describes the concept of aesthetic resources in terms of scenic vistas, scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway), and the existing visual quality of the project area. In addition, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, this chapter describes potential impacts related to light and glare. The following analysis is based on information drawn from the Placer County General Plan,¹ the Placer County General Plan EIR,² the Placer County Design Guidelines,³ the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines,⁴ and the Squaw Valley General Plan (SVGP) and Land Use Ordinance.⁵

Pursuant to the court ruling in *Preserve Poway v. City of Poway* (2016) 245 Cal. App.4th 560 [199 Cal.Rptr. 3d 600], community character is separate and apart from aesthetic impacts and, thus, is not a CEQA issue. Rather, the analysis of aesthetics should be limited to tangible, physical evidence that a project is visually inconsistent with the surrounding community (rather than a psychological “feel”). Therefore, where applicable, the analysis presented within this chapter focuses on potential physical changes to visual composition of the project site and surrounding area, rather than overall community character.

4.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The following setting information provides an overview of the existing conditions of visual resources in the vicinity of the project site, which is located southwest of the intersection of Olympic Valley Road and State Route (SR) 89, in the unincorporated community of Olympic Valley (formerly known as Squaw Valley), Placer County, California.

Visual Character of the Region

The project site is located within the existing Olympic Valley Park, which is situated within the Squaw Creek watershed of the Sierra Nevada range (Sierras). The Squaw Creek watershed encompasses an area of approximately 5,350 acres, and is characterized by steep mountain slopes and a relatively flat high mountain meadow. Three major peaks dominate the western edge of the Valley: Granite Chief (9,006 feet), Emigrant Peak (8,797 feet), and Washeshu Peak (8,885 feet). The valley floor is approximately 6,200 feet above mean sea level (msl). The valley is a flat grass-covered open area traversed by numerous natural drainage channels of Squaw Creek, which converge into one channel at the mouth of the valley to the west before emptying into the Truckee River. During the summer months a golf course (Resort at Squaw Creek) is visible in the meadow to the south of Olympic Valley Road heading west. To the east, the valley floor opens into a narrow valley formed by the Truckee River surrounded on the north, south, and west by the

¹ Placer County. *Countywide General Plan Policy Document*. August 1994 (Updated May 2013).

² Placer County. *Countywide General Plan EIR*. July 1994.

³ Placer County. *Design Guidelines Manual*. Revised September 24, 2003.

⁴ Placer County. *Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines*. Adopted May 7, 2013.

⁵ Placer County. *1983 Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance*. October 6, 1983.



steep walls of the valley. The valley floor is a narrow box canyon that is visually and physically separated from other surrounding areas. The community of Alpine Meadows is located to the south on the other side of the 8,070-foot KT-22 ski run. The project area is known for its recreational amenities, including snow skiing, snowboarding, and sledding, as well as golfing, swimming, tennis, hiking, bicycling, and ice skating.

According to the SVGP, the visual characteristics of the Olympic Valley environment are one of its most important attributes, which can be divided into two categories of equal importance: natural features and man-made features.

Natural Features

Natural features in the region consist primarily of the mountain slopes, the peaks, the meadow and adjoining area, and the watercourses, which provide the key identifying characteristics of Olympic Valley. The degree to which the natural features of the area may be altered by humans without adversely affecting the region's aesthetic value must be considered in reviewing each proposed development project. The mountain peaks and ridges define the point at which the mountains meet the sky, and, thus, are important to retain from a visual standpoint. The edge of the meadow, where the coniferous trees approach, provides an area separating the mountain slopes from the valley floor. According to the SVGP, the watercourses and related stream environment zones of the region are a similar type of transition area that deserves protection.

Man-Made Features

The visual impact of buildings, parking lots, signs, roads and other man-made structures play an important part in the success of converting Olympic Valley into an active, viable, destination resort community. Unfortunately, poor design, denuded areas, overhead utilities, junk cars, debris, and poorly designed signs all detract from the aesthetics of the area. The Olympic Valley Design Review Committee (DRC) has been established, which has authority over most new construction, remodeling, rehabilitation of structures, and other proposed improvements. The proposed project is subject to DRC review.

Summer Characteristics

During the summer months the area generally has fewer people and less activity on the ski slopes of Olympic Valley, resulting in less traffic in the valley and fewer cars parked at the base of the mountain. The views of the mountains are less obstructed during the summer months due to the presence of fewer people in the area. The chair lifts, lift towers, and areas of snow storage are elements that are not as dominant during the summer months.

Winter Characteristics

During the winter months, the chair lifts and lift towers become visually more dominant due to the white backdrop of the snow. In addition, because the overall activity level of the area increases during the winter months, people skiing on the mountain and hundreds of parked cars in the day-skier parking lot become visually dominant elements in contrast to the summer months.

State Scenic Highways

The nearest State highway to the project site, located approximately 125 feet to the east, is SR 89. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) map of designated and eligible scenic routes under the California Scenic Highway Program, SR 89 is not an officially



designated State scenic highway and designated State scenic highways do not exist within the vicinity of the project site or in Placer County.⁶

Visual Character of the Project Site and Surrounding Area

The following information provides an overview of the physical conditions of the project site and surrounding area in relation to visual character.

Project Site

The project site consists of approximately one acre located within the 26.8-acre Olympic Valley Park site, 101 Olympic Valley Road, southwest of the intersection of Olympic Valley Road and SR 89, in the unincorporated community of Olympic Valley (see Figure 4-1). Olympic Valley Park is an approximately 26.8-acre park, consisting of five parcels, owned and operated by Placer County. The project site is identified by Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 096-290-021-000 and 096-290-056-000, and would be located between the Olympic Valley Park driveway entrance to the parking lot from Olympic Valley Road, and the existing pickleball courts.

The project site is situated on undulating topography which runs north to south. The scattered rock outcrops and boulders located on-site create microtopographic variations ranging from 6,115 feet to 6,130 feet above msl. The project site contains areas of vegetation, predominantly montane coniferous forest, which largely consist of white fir and pine trees native to the area. Patches of willow scrub occur in scattered locations within stormwater detention basins constructed for the Olympic Valley Park.

Riprap stone is scattered along the eastern boundary of the project site along the pickleball courts and the northwestern corner of the project site. A 0.04-acre drainage swale, which was constructed as part of the 2004 improvements to Olympic Valley Park, supports wetland vegetation and occurs along the south side of Olympic Valley Road, flowing from west to east.

Surrounding Areas

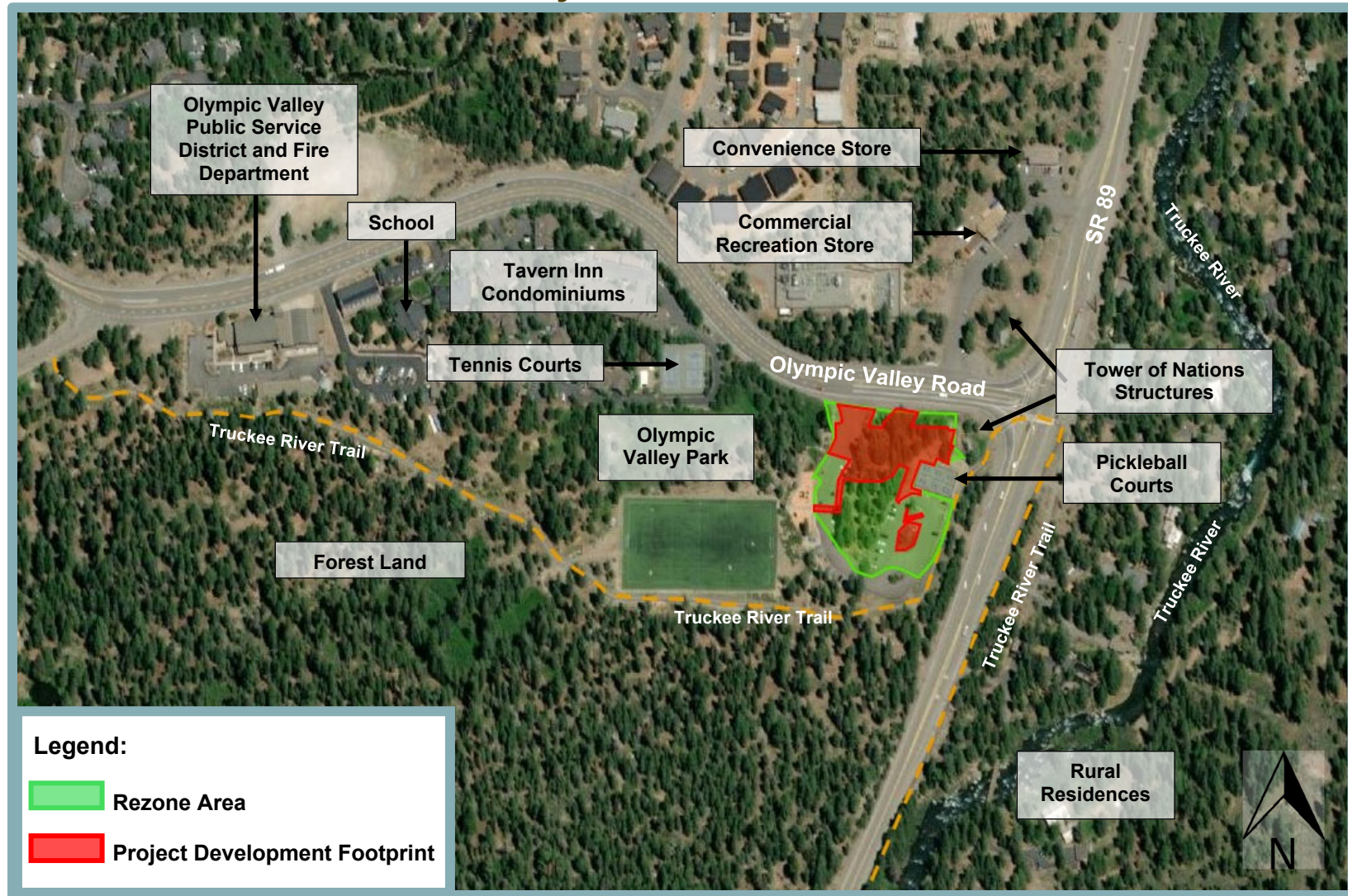
The project site is bounded by Olympic Valley Road to the north, SR 89 and the Truckee River Trail to the east, and Olympic Valley Park facilities to the south and west. The area north of the project site, across Olympic Valley Road, is sparsely developed and is largely occupied by forest and meadow vegetation. However, a commercial recreation store and convenience store (7-Eleven) are located on the west side of SR 89, north of the project site, across Olympic Valley Road. A soccer field and playground are located west of the project site within Olympic Valley Park. The Olympic Valley community is located further west, which includes condominiums and single-family residences in the vicinity of the project site to the northwest.

Rural residences are located east of the project site, across SR 89, and the Truckee River is located further east, approximately 790 feet from the project site. The Truckee River Trail and forest land are located south of the project site. The Palisades Tahoe, which contains lodging, ski lifts, a golf course, and associated commercial uses is located further southwest.

⁶ Department of Transportation. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System, Placer County*. Available at: <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed February 2022.



**Figure 4-1
Project Site Boundaries**



Lake Tahoe is located approximately four miles southeast of the project site, and the Town of Truckee is located approximately nine miles northwest of the project site. Although the proposed project would not have potential to affect Lake Tahoe within the context of aesthetics, it is noted that Lake Tahoe is considered a unique and significant environmental resource; the U.S. Supreme Court has noted that Lake Tahoe is “uniquely beautiful,” and a “national treasure” famous for its water’s “exceptional clarity,” (Tahoe-Sierra Preservation Council, Inc. v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency [2002] 535 U.S. 302, 307.).

Off-Site Improvement Areas

The proposed project would include a sanitary sewer force main along Olympic Valley Road. The force main would begin at the intersection of Olympic Valley Road and the project driveway, and run northwest approximately 760 feet along Olympic Valley Road to connect to the existing sanitary sewer manhole located east of the Tavern Inn Condominiums. In addition, a wet well and sanitary sewer lift station would be constructed north of the project site, near the project driveway, within the Olympic Valley Road right-of-way (ROW). Generally, the off-site improvement areas do not possess any unique visual characteristics.

Viewer Types

Viewer types in the vicinity that have views of the project site include the following:

- Residents with views of the project site include the Tavern Inn Condominiums to the west, and the rural residences to the east. However, views are blocked by existing vegetation in the area.
- Motorists along Olympic Valley Road and SR 89 have existing views of the project site as they drive past the project site.
- Recreationists include those individuals who are involved in recreational activities and have views of the project site. This group of individuals could include employees; skiers/snowboarders; bicyclists, pedestrians and tram riders during the winter and summer; and individuals using the Olympic Valley Park and trail system in the project vicinity. As they travel to their destination or participate in outdoor recreational activities, recreationists have views of the project site.

Public Versus Private Views

Motorists along nearby roadways, as well as the nearby residents east and west of the project site, and recreationalists traveling within the project vicinity would be considered sensitive visual receptors. However, it is important to distinguish between public and private views. Private views are views seen from privately-owned land and are typically viewed by individual viewers, including views from private residences. Public views are views that are experienced by the collective public. In the case of the proposed project, public views would consist primarily of views from Olympic Valley Road and SR 89 in the project vicinity.

CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) case law has established that only public views, not private views, are protected under CEQA. For example, in *Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah* (1991) 2 Cal.App.4th 720 [3 Cal. Rptr.2d 488] the court determined that “we must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general. As recognized by the court in *Topanga Beach Renters Assn. v. Department of General Services* (1976) 58 Cal.App.3d 188 [129 Cal.Rptr. 739]: ‘[A]ll government activity has some direct or indirect adverse effect on some persons. The issue is not whether [the project] will adversely affect particular persons but whether [the project] will



adversely affect the environment of persons in general.” Such a conclusion is consistent with the thresholds of significance established in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus the aesthetic impact analysis on potential impacts to public views, rather than private views.

Existing Conditions of Key Viewpoints

Key public viewpoints that would most clearly display the proposed project's potential visual effects have been selected for in-depth analysis. The segments of Olympic Valley Road and SR 89 within the project vicinity are characterized as key viewpoints (see Figure 4-2).

Existing Views from Olympic Valley Road

Views from Olympic Valley Road east (i.e., views of the south side of the roadway from motorists travelling eastbound toward SR 89) consist of mainly Olympic Valley Road and the existing Olympic Valley Park (Figure 4-3). While the existing on-site trees are visible from Olympic Valley Road east, the project site is not screened from the roadway. Rather, the existing Olympic Valley Park entrance and associated parking lot can be seen from this viewpoint. Views of the forested mountains are visible in the background.

Similarly, views from Olympic Valley Road west (i.e., views of the south side of the roadway from motorists travelling westbound towards Palisades Tahoe) towards the project site consist of Olympic Valley Road and the existing Olympic Valley Park (see Figure 4-4). However, as shown in the figure, the project site is heavily screened from the roadway by existing on-site trees, and the existing Tower of Nations structures can be seen at the intersection of Olympic Valley Road and SR 89. Views of the forested mountains are visible in the background.

Existing Views from SR 89

Views from SR 89 towards the project site consist of the roadway and existing on-site trees in the foreground and midground, followed by densely forested mountains in the background (see Figure 4-5). The existing Tower of Nations structures can be seen in the distance, and the existing pickleball courts are marginally visible through the trees along the roadway. The rural, forested visual character of the viewshed is consistent with the montane coniferous forest landscape in the project vicinity.

Light Pollution and Glare

Light pollution refers to all forms of unwanted light in the night sky, including glare, light trespass, sky glow, and excessive illumination at an intensity that is inappropriate. Views of the night sky can be an important part of the natural environment, particularly in communities surrounded by extensive open space, such as mountain communities in the Tahoe-Truckee region. Excessive light and glare can also be visually disruptive to humans and nocturnal animal species.

Electric lighting also increases night sky brightness and is the human-made source of sky glow. Light that is either emitted directly upward by luminaires or reflected from the ground is scattered by dust and gas molecules in the atmosphere, producing a luminous background, which has the effect of reducing one's ability to view the stars.



Figure 4-2
Representative Views of the Proposed Project



Figure 4-3
Existing Views Towards The Project Site From Olympic Valley Road East (View 1)



Figure 4-4
Existing Views Towards The Project Site From Olympic Valley Road West (View 2)



Figure 4-5
Existing Views Towards The Project Site From SR 89 (View 3)



Currently, the project site is primarily characterized by undeveloped areas of vegetation, predominantly montane coniferous forest, which largely consist of white fir and pine trees native to the area. However, the site is located between the Olympic Valley Park driveway entrance to the parking lot from Olympic Valley Road and the existing pickleball courts. As such, sources of light and glare that currently occur on the project site include parking lot lighting and headlights from vehicles using the parking lot.

4.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

Applicable federal laws or regulations pertaining to the aesthetic quality of the project area do not exist. However, the existing State and local laws and regulations applicable to the proposed project are listed below.

State Regulations

The following is an applicable State regulation related to aesthetic resources.

California Scenic Highway Program

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been so designated. Such highways are identified in Section 263 et seq. of the California Streets and Highways Code.

Local Regulations

The following local regulations are applicable to the proposed project.

Placer County General Plan

The following design goals and policies of the Placer County General Plan are applicable to the proposed project.

Goal 1.K To protect the visual and scenic resources of Placer County as important quality-of-life amenities for County residents and a principal asset in the promotion of recreation and tourism.

Policy 1.K.1 The County shall require that new development in scenic areas (e.g., river canyons, lake watersheds, scenic highway corridors, ridgelines, and steep slopes) is planned and designed in a manner which employs design, construction, and maintenance techniques that:

- a. Avoid locating structures along ridgelines and steep slopes;
- b. Incorporate design and screening measures to minimize the visibility of structures and graded areas; and
- c. Maintain the character and visual quality of the area.

Policy 1.K.2 The County shall require that new development in scenic areas be designed to utilize natural landforms and vegetation for screening structures, access roads, building foundations, and cut and fill slopes.



Policy 1.K.3 The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.

Policy 1.K.4 The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines:

- a. Limit cuts and fills;
- b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land;
- c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time;
- d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season;
- e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development; and
- f. Provide and maintain site-specific construction Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Policy 1.K.5 The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to conform to the natural terrain.

Goal 1.O To promote and enhance the quality and aesthetics of development in Placer County.

Policy 1.O.1 Except as otherwise provided in the Design Guidelines of an approved Specific Plan, the County shall require all new development to be designed in compliance with applicable provisions of the Placer County Design Guidelines Manual.

Policy 1.O.3 The County shall require that all new development be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area. Structures, especially those outside of village, urban, and commercial centers, should be designed and located so that:

- a. They do not silhouette against the sky above ridgelines or hilltops;
- b. Rooflines and vertical architectural features blend with and do not detract from the natural background or ridge outline;
- c. They fit the natural terrain; and
- d. They utilize building materials, colors, and textures that blend with the natural landscape (e.g., avoid high contrasts).

Policy 1.O.4 The County shall require that new rural and suburban development be designed to preserve and maintain the rural character and quality of the County.



- Policy 1.O.5 The County shall require that new development at entrances to rural communities be designed to include elements such as signage, landscaping, and appropriate architectural detailing to help establish distinct identities for such communities.
- Policy 1.O.8 The County shall, where appropriate, require new development to provide activity pockets along public sidewalks as pedestrian amenities, including such features as benches, sitting ledges, and mini-parks.
- Policy 1.O.9 The County shall discourage the use of outdoor lighting that shines unnecessarily onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.
- Goal 6.D To preserve and protect the valuable vegetation resources of Placer County.
 - Policy 6.D.1 The County shall encourage landowners and developers to preserve the integrity of existing terrain and natural vegetation in visually-sensitive areas such as hillsides, ridges, and along important transportation corridors.
 - Policy 6.D.12 The County shall support the retention of heavily vegetated corridors along circulation corridors to preserve their rural character.

Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines

The Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines were adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors on May 7, 2013. The overall purpose of the Placer County Landscape Design Guidelines is to provide County staff, prospective developers, and stakeholders with a basic framework for designing landscaped areas within unincorporated Placer County and to ensure continuity, consistency, and quality design. In addition, the Guidelines are used to assist the Planning Services Division with their review of submitted plans for landscape improvements by providing consistent and specific design criteria intended to help determine if a proposal is acceptable. The Guidelines focus on landscaping requirements for streetscape and parking lots.

Placer County Design Guidelines Manual

The Placer County Design Guidelines Manual includes guidelines and standards that aim to remove as much design discretion as possible at the staff level in order for prospective developers to assess their chances of approval based on consistency with the manual. The overall goal of the Placer County Design Guidelines Manual is to promote visual environments in the communities of Placer County that are of high aesthetic quality, offer variety in developing community design images reflective of community heritage, and, in some cases, maintain an overall rural continuity while, in others, identify an appropriate urban design theme.

While the Placer County Design Guidelines Manual does not include a particular "style" for residential or institutional structures in Placer County, the focus should be on constructing a high-quality environment which is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood character. The Guidelines strive for "quality" architecture through the descriptions of appropriate and inappropriate materials and architectural expression.



Squaw Valley Design Review Guidelines

The SVGP requires design review for all buildings and signs proposed in the valley visible from Olympic Valley Road. The Squaw Valley Design Review Guidelines set forth the design standards and guidelines used by the DRC and the County planning staff in reviewing projects.

Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance

The SVGP was adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors in June 1983 (last revised in 1997) and is the community plan for the approximately 4,700-acre unincorporated area of Placer County that includes Olympic Valley. The implementing Ordinance, the Squaw Valley Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 40, Placer County Code), was adopted in June 1983; and modified on September 13, 1983; February 11, 1986 (ZTA-278); April 16, 1985 (GPA-250, REA-843); August 14, 1986 (GPA-312, REA-857). The proposed project would be subject to all policies, objectives, recommendations, and standards contained in the Plan Text and Land Use Ordinance, which guides future development of Olympic Valley and includes the following guideline pertaining to the protection and enhancement of the visual environment from Section III, Purposes, Principles, and Goals of the SVGP:

- 1) Both the quality and quantity of development must be planned to conserve, protect, and enhance the aesthetic, ecological and environmental assets of Olympic Valley.

4.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This section describes the standards of significance and methodology used to analyze and determine the proposed project's potential impacts related to aesthetics. A discussion of the project's impacts, as well as mitigation measures where necessary, is also presented.

Standards of Significance

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an aesthetics impact is considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;
- In a non-urbanized area, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point) or, in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The following issue related to whether the proposed project would result in impacts have already been dismissed in the Initial Study for the proposed project, included as Appendix A to this EIR, and will not be discussed further:

- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway.



Method of Analysis

The section below gives full consideration to the development of the proposed project and acknowledges physical changes to the existing setting. Impacts to the existing environment of the project area are to be determined by the contrast between the visual setting before and after buildout of the proposed project. The standards of significance listed above are used to delineate the significance of any visual alterations of the site, including alterations that would impact views from public viewsheds in the project area. The standards are not based solely on a change in the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, but whether the changes would *substantially* degrade said visual character or quality. Computer-generated photo simulations were used to aid in this evaluation.

Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following discussion of impacts related to aesthetics is based on implementation of the proposed project in comparison to existing conditions and the standards of significance presented above.

4-1 Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Based on the analysis below, the impact is *less than significant*.

A scenic vista, as defined in this EIR, is an area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. This includes any such areas designated by a federal, State, or local agency. According to Policy 1.K.1 in the Placer County General Plan, Placer County considers resources such as river canyons, lake watersheds, scenic highway corridors, ridgelines, and steep slopes to be valuable scenic resources. In general, a project's impact to a scenic vista would occur if development of the project would substantially change or remove a scenic vista.

The SVGP states that natural features, primarily mountain slopes, peaks, meadows, and watercourses, provide the key identifying characteristics of Olympic Valley. According to the SVGP, the degree to which natural features may be altered by man without adversely affecting their aesthetic value must be considered in reviewing each proposed development project. Nonetheless, federal and State agencies have not designated any such locations within Olympic Valley for viewing and sightseeing. Similarly, Placer County has not officially designated scenic vistas within Olympic Valley. Notwithstanding, unofficial scenic views are prevalent throughout Olympic Valley. The surrounding mountain slopes and peaks create scenic views from almost any location within Olympic Valley. While the mountain peaks and ridges are important to retain from a visual standpoint, as they define the point at which the mountains meet the sky, the project site is located within a relatively flat area of Olympic Valley. Therefore, the proposed project would not alter the distant views of the mountain peaks and ridges that are present in the background of the project viewshed.

Because officially-designated scenic vistas are not located in Olympic Valley, the proposed project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to scenic vistas.

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.



4-2 In a non-urbanized area, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point) or, in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Based on the analysis below, the impact is *less than significant*.

While urban development currently exists within the project vicinity, the visual quality of the area surrounding the project site is largely characterized by undeveloped forest land. As such, the analysis within this chapter considers the project area to be non-urbanized in order to provide a conservative analysis.

The proposed project would develop the site with a 29.8-foot-tall, two-story, U-shaped, 20,000 square-foot (sf) museum and community cultural center building. Various associated improvements would be included in the development of the proposed project, including, but not limited to parking lot improvements, landscaping and utility installation, as well as construction of a wet well, sewer lift station and force main within the Olympic Valley Road ROW.

Vehicle access to the proposed project would be provided by an existing driveway from Olympic Valley Road, which currently serves as the entrance to Olympic Valley Park and connects to the existing surface parking lot. Up to 6,000 sf of the driveway and asphalt parking lot would be resurfaced and restriped, and a planting area in the eastern portion of the parking lot would be removed. Four-foot-wide concrete walkways would be included throughout the site to provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the proposed building from the existing parking lot and Olympic Valley Road. In addition, a six-foot-wide concrete ramp would be constructed at the building entry point behind rolled curb and gutter. Improved pedestrian facilities would include a crosswalk connecting the sidewalk in front of the building to the playground and sports field west of the building. Additionally, the project would construct a walking path, which would bisect the proposed V-shaped garden and lead from the building to the existing Tower of Nations structure at the southwest corner of the SR 89 and Olympic Valley Road intersection.

With respect to the proposed landscaping, a total of 228 trees are currently located on the project site, and approximately 109 trees would be removed as part of the proposed project. However, the existing willow scrub areas would remain, and landscaping improvements, including a variety of drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and flowers, would be provided throughout the project site, as well as along the Olympic Valley Road frontage in the northwest corner of the site. As such, the proposed landscaping and preservation of the remaining on-site trees would help to screen the project from public views.

The majority of the proposed utilities infrastructure improvements would be located on-site; however, as previously discussed, the proposed project would construct a wet well and a sanitary sewer lift station north of the project site, near the project driveway, within the Olympic Valley Road right-of-way, as well as a sanitary sewer force main along Olympic Valley Road. All new utility lines would be placed underground; as such,



installation of the proposed utilities would not permanently degrade the visual character or quality of the project area.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project and associated off-site improvements would include grading of the site, trenching for utilities, and other temporary activities that would be visible from Olympic Valley Road and SR 89. It should be noted that, as required by Mitigation Measure 6-1 (see Chapter 6, Noise, of this EIR), the proposed project would be required to incorporate the use of eight-foot-tall temporary sound barriers along the west and east boundaries of the construction site, as well as six-foot-tall temporary sound barriers along the north and south sides of the off-site sewer improvement route. The approximate locations of the sound barriers are shown on Figure 6-3 of this EIR. While the sound barriers would be visible from Olympic Valley Road, the use of sound barriers would be temporary. For example, construction of the proposed sanitary sewer force main is anticipated to occur over a total of five days. Therefore, the use of sound barriers at the project site during construction would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

As discussed above, public views of the project site are afforded from Olympic Valley Road and SR 89. Changes to the aforementioned public views due to development of the proposed project are discussed separately in further detail below. Photo simulations were conducted by Ward Young Architecture & Planning (Ward Young) and include public views of the project site with a rendering of the proposed project.

Views from Olympic Valley Road

Currently, views from this public vantage point along Olympic Valley Road consist of the roadway and the existing Olympic Valley Park. While the project site is heavily screened from the roadway by existing on-site trees when travelling westbound along the roadway, when travelling eastbound, the existing Olympic Valley Park entrance and associated parking lot can be seen from the road. In addition, views of the existing Tower of Nations structures can be seen in the distance, and forested mountains are visible in the background.

Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7 show the view of the project site from Olympic Valley Road, first as the viewshed currently exists, followed by a view with the proposed project incorporated. As shown in the figures, the proposed project would be clearly visible to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians travelling both east and west along Olympic Valley Road. However, existing trees along the project boundary would partially screen the building from travelers along the roadway, and the project site is already developed with the Olympic Valley Park and surface parking lot. Additionally, the proposed building design would be stepped down toward the parking lot in order to minimize the building height measured from the project site entrance. As a result, while the proposed building would reach a maximum height of 29.8 feet at the southern end of the building, the building would reach a maximum height of 16.4 feet at the northern end of the building (see Figure 3-6 included in, Chapter 3, Project Description, of this EIR). In addition, even at the building's tallest point (29.8 feet), the building would not project above the tree line or skyline and, thus, the distant mountain ridgeline and skyline would be preserved with the implementation of the proposed project; therefore, the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing distant mountain views.



Figure 4-6
Pre-Project (A) Versus Post-Project (B) Views From Olympic Valley Road East (View 1)

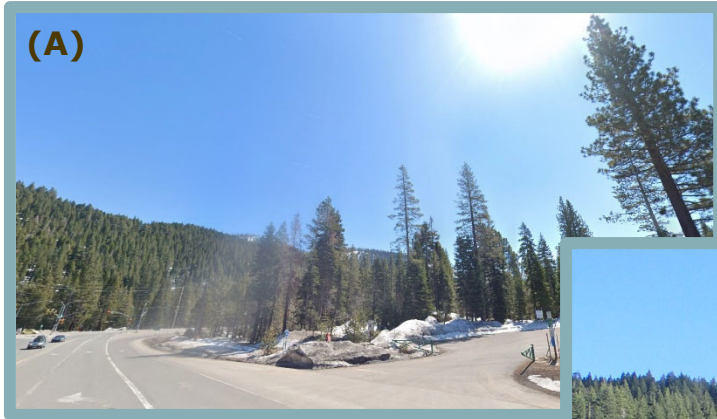
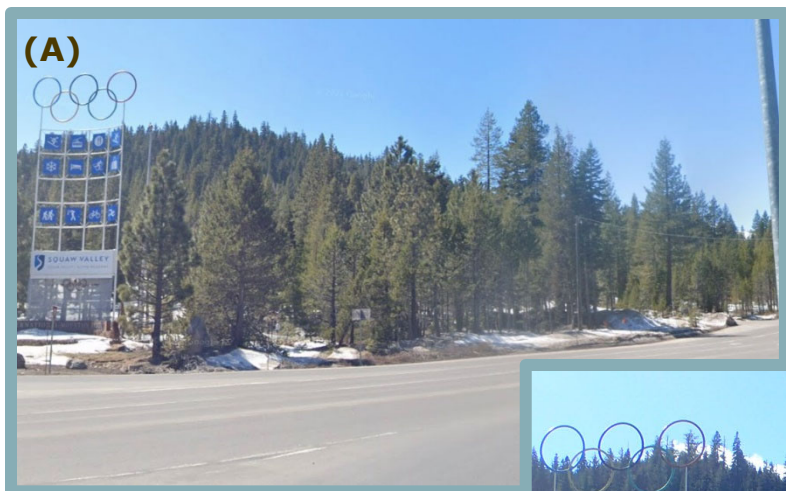


Figure 4-7
Pre-Project (A) Versus Post-Project (B) Views From Olympic Valley Road West (View 2)



Furthermore, the proposed project would implement the use of natural looking building materials to help the structures blend with the natural vegetation. As such, the proposed project, as simulated from the Olympic Valley Road viewpoints, adheres to the policies included in the Placer County General Plan with respect to the use of natural landforms and vegetation for screening purposes, the requirement that all new development be designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the area, and the requirement that new rural and suburban development be designed to preserve and maintain the rural character and quality of the County.

Based on the above, public views of the project site from Olympic Valley Road would not be considered to be substantially degraded by the proposed project.

Views from SR 89

Currently, views from SR 89 towards the project site consist of the roadway and existing on-site trees in the foreground and midground, framed by densely forested mountains in the background. The existing Tower of Nations structures can be seen in the distance, and the existing pickleball courts are just barely visible through the trees along the roadway. Figure 4-8 shows the view of the project site from SR 89, first as the viewshed currently exists, followed by a view with the proposed project incorporated.

As shown in the figure, the existing mature trees along the project boundary would almost completely screen the proposed building from the roadway. As such, the skyline seen from the vantage point of SR 89 would be preserved with the implementation of the proposed project. Furthermore, as discussed above, the proposed project would implement the use of natural looking building materials to help the structures blend with the natural vegetation. Therefore, public views towards the project site from SR 89 would not be substantially degraded by the proposed project.

Conclusion

While the proposed project would result in changes in the view from Olympic Valley Road, the project would be almost completely screened from SR 89, and the distant mountain ridgeline and skyline would be preserved with the implementation of the proposed project. In addition, the proposed project would be designed to be of the same style and décor as the surrounding community to maintain the small village atmosphere required by the SVGP, and the proposed building would implement the use of natural looking building materials to help the structures blend with the natural vegetation.

Furthermore, as described above, the SVGP requires design review for all buildings and signs proposed in the Valley visible from Olympic Valley Road. The Squaw Valley Design Review Guidelines set forth the design standards and guidelines used by the DRC and the County planning staff in reviewing projects. Pursuant to County Code Section 17.52.070(A), the purpose of design review is to provide special regulations to protect and enhance the aesthetic character of lands and buildings within public view; to protect historic buildings; to minimize any adverse impacts of conflicting land uses; to enhance tourism through the protection of lands and buildings having unique aesthetic characteristics; and to provide special project review procedures for lands and uses which by their nature require special attention to landscaping, circulation, and/or energy conservation.



Figure 4-8
Pre-Project (A) Versus Post-Project (B) Views From SR 89 (View 3)



Issues to be considered by the DRC include, but are not limited to, review of proposed building arrangements, setbacks, walls and fences, building exterior appearance, off-street parking, grading, drainage, circulation (including pedestrian and bicycle circulation), landscaping, lighting, and signs.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not be considered to substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, or conflict with regulations governing scenic quality. Thus, a ***less-than-significant*** impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.

4-3 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Based on the analysis below and with implementation of mitigation, the impact is *less than significant*.

As noted previously, the project site is primarily characterized by an undeveloped landscape located between the Olympic Valley Park driveway entrance and the existing pickleball courts. Development of the proposed project would include the construction of a two-story museum and community cultural center building, as well as various associated on- and off-site improvements.

Sources of light and glare currently occur on the project site in the form of parking lot lighting and headlights from vehicles using the parking lot. The proposed project includes the construction of a two-story museum and community cultural center building; thus, the proposed project would increase the amount of light on the project site in the form of light fixtures on the exteriors of the buildings, spillover light from the interior lighting of the building, and increased motor vehicle traffic within the parking lot. In addition, the glass windows facing Olympic Valley Road have the potential to result in increased glare in the project vicinity. Furthermore, the proposed project would include occasional evening events which could result in the generation of additional sources of nighttime light and glare on-site.

The proposed project would be required to comply with the Squaw Valley Design Review Guidelines, which includes the following guidelines related to lighting:

1. Exterior lighting should be designed as part of the architectural and site design of the project.
2. Fixture mounting height should be appropriate to the use, the project, and the setting.
3. Overall lighting levels should be compatible with neighborhood ambient light level.
4. Parking lot and building lights should be directed downward to prevent spillover onto neighboring properties and streets.
5. Posts and standards along thoroughfares and in parking lots should be replaced so that they do not present hazards to pedestrians, vehicles or snow removal activities.
6. Lights shall not blink, flash or change intensity.



In addition, the proposed project would be required to be constructed using appropriate building materials such as low-glare glass and low-glare building glaze or finish. However, because the types and specific locations of lighting have not yet been determined, the proposed project could increase the amount of light and glare generated on-site, which could be visible from the surrounding residential development and roadways in the project vicinity. Therefore, the proposed project could be considered to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and a **significant** impact could occur.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the above potential impact to a *less-than-significant* level.

4-3 *Prior to the issuance of building permits for any development on the project site, the project applicant shall submit a lighting plan for the project to the Olympic Valley Design Review Committee for review and approval, demonstrating that proposed lighting is Dark-Sky compliant as specified by the International Dark-Sky Association and consistent with Squaw Valley Design Review Guidelines. The lighting plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following provisions:*

- *Shield or screen lighting fixtures to direct the light downward and prevent light spill on adjacent properties;*
- *Place and shield or screen flood and area lighting needed for construction activities and/or security so as not to disturb adjacent residential areas and passing motorists;*
- *For public lighting, prohibit the use of light fixtures that are of unusually high intensity or brightness (e.g., harsh mercury vapor, low-pressure sodium, or fluorescent bulbs) or that blink or flash; and*
- *Use appropriate building materials (such as low-glare glass, low-glare building glaze or finish, neutral, earth-toned colored paint and roofing materials), shielded or screened lighting, and appropriate signage to prevent light and glare from adversely affecting motorists on nearby roadways.*

Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As defined in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines, “cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable, compound, or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects.

Some types of impacts to aesthetic resources are localized and not cumulative in nature. For example, the creation of glare or shadows at one location is not worsened by glare or shadows created at another location. Rather these effects are independent, and the determination as to whether they are adverse is specific to the project and location where they are created. Projects that block a view or affect the visual quality of a site also have localized aesthetic impacts. The



impact occurs specific to a site or area and remains independent from another project elsewhere that may block a view or degrade the visual environment of a specific site.

Two types of aesthetic impacts may be additive in nature and, thus, cumulative, including night sky lighting and overall changes in the visual environment as the result of increasing urbanization of large areas. As development in one area changes from rural to urban, and this pattern continues to occur throughout the undeveloped areas of a jurisdiction, the changes in visual character may become additive and cumulatively considerable.

Similarly, as development in one area increases and possibly expands over time and meets or connects with development in an adjoining exurban area, the effect of night sky lighting experienced outside of the region may increase in the form of larger and/or more intense nighttime glow in the viewshed. The proposed project's incremental contribution to changes in visual character and night sky lighting are addressed below.

4-4 Long-term changes in visual character associated with cumulative development of the proposed project in combination with future buildout of the SVGP. Based on the analysis below, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact is *less than cumulatively considerable*.

The geographic setting for analysis of long-term cumulative changes in visual character associated with the proposed project is the area covered by the SVGP, as development within the SVGP has the potential to affect many of the same views analyzed for the proposed project. Specific existing views of the project site from Olympic Valley Road and SR 89 are identified in Figure 4-6 through Figure 4-8, above. Future development within the SVGP would result in changes to the existing land use environment through conversion of vacant land to developed uses that would result in a change in visual character. The goals and objectives of the SVGP are to identify features of the SVGP area that characterize the unique nature and identifying traits of the community and then to specify standards of site development for proposed projects, which would implement the goals and policies of the SVGP.

The cumulative setting also includes the development of the approved Village at Palisades Tahoe Specific Plan (VPTSP). The VPTSP area encompasses approximately 94 acres, within which the proposed project is not located. The VPTSP would allow for development of resort hotel, residential, commercial, retail, and recreational uses. The VPTSP EIR concluded the visual resources impacts resulting from the VPTSP are substantial, and would contribute considerably to a cumulative impact.

The development of the proposed project in combination with other cumulative development, including the VPTSP, would result in a significant impact related to the change in visual character of the surrounding area. However, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(4), "The mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the proposed project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable." Therefore, it is not necessarily true that, even where cumulative impacts are significant, any level of incremental contribution must be deemed cumulatively considerable.



Development of the proposed project would only minimally contribute to the change in the visual character of the Valley because the project entails developing a portion of the previously developed Olympic Valley Park, much of which is currently screened from existing roadways by forest vegetation. In addition, the project site is separated from the VPTSP area by approximately 1.75 miles. Given the forested, mountainous terrain of the surrounding environment, views of the project site from the VPTSP area are completely obscured. Nonetheless, any cumulative development within the vicinity of the project area would result in a change in visual character of the region. However, similar to the proposed project, development within the Valley would be required to comply with the SVGP, any applicable specific plan, any applicable development guidelines, and the County Zoning Code, which govern allowable uses and development architecture and design. Compliance with such plans would help to ensure that impacts related to aesthetics are minimized through the location and design of future projects and consistency with what has been anticipated by the County. In addition, a substantial portion of the Olympic Valley area has already been built out; thus, the remainder of the anticipated development associated with such, including the proposed project, would not be expected to represent a substantial contribution to the change in visual character of the region.

Overall, in terms of the change to the visual character of the region, development on the project site would be typical of what is anticipated to occur in the surrounding area and elsewhere in Olympic Valley. Thus, the project's incremental contribution to the cumulative aesthetic impact due to implementation of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would be considered ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

Mitigation Measure(s)
None required.

4-5 Creation of new sources of light or glare associated with cumulative development of the proposed project in combination with future buildout of the SVGP. Based on the analysis below, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact is *less than cumulatively considerable***.**

Cumulative effects of lighting are visible over a wide area, due to the potential for lighting from a number of projects to create sky glow. The project site currently has night time lighting under existing conditions; however, the proposed project would introduce new lighting sources at the project site. The proposed project in combination with related development projects, listed above, could result in a significant cumulative impact related to night lighting and sky glow in the region. However, for the reasons set forth below, the project's incremental contribution to this potential significant cumulative impact is not cumulatively considerable.

As described in Impact 4-3, above, the project would be required to submit a lighting plan for the project to the Olympic Valley DRC for review and approval prior to the issuance of any building permit (see Mitigation Measure 4-3). Mitigation Measure 4-3 requires the project's lighting to be Dark-Sky compliant as specified by the International Dark-Sky Association. In addition, the Placer County Design Guidelines Manual contains outdoor lighting standards which aim to prohibit unnecessary and unwarranted illumination of an adjacent residential property. The Manual restricts the maximum height for building and



freestanding lighting to 14 feet, restricts lighting directed towards roadways, and discourages upward lighting. The exterior lighting throughout the project site would be designed and selected to provide appropriate light levels to reduce long-range visibility of night lighting with full cut-off fixture designs.

As part of the Design Review process, the DRC will review the project's proposed lighting to ensure that it is Dark-Sky compliant and minimizes any adverse impacts of conflicting land uses. In addition, the DRC would review project plans to ensure that the project does not include the use of any highly reflective materials or reflective glass in order to avoid the creation of substantial glare. Thus, the proposed project would not be anticipated to create any glare issues. Similar to the proposed project, any future development in the project area would also be required to be reviewed by the DRC, and those project-specific impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

Based on the above, the proposed project's incremental contribution to the cumulative impact of light and glare due to past, present and reasonably foreseeable development in the area would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

Mitigation Measure(s)

None required.

